

ART. XXV.—*The Diseases of the Prostate, their Pathology and Treatment.*

Comprising the second edition of "The Enlarged Prostate," and a dissertation "On the Healthy and Morbid Anatomy of the Prostate Gland" to which the Jacksonian prize, for the year 1860, was awarded by the Royal College of Surgeons of England. By HENRY THOMPSON, F. R. C. S., &c. &c. London: John Churchill, 1861. 8vo. pp. 364.

In the number of this journal for April, 1858, we gave a very full notice of the work of Mr. Thompson, entitled "The Enlarged Prostate, its Pathology and Treatment." In the spring of 1861, the Jacksonian prize, the subject of which was "The Healthy and Morbid Anatomy of the Prostate Gland," was awarded to this surgeon by the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons. In the volume before us this prize essay has been incorporated with the work first mentioned.

In this way considerable and very valuable additions have been made to the original volume to which we took great pleasure in inviting the attention of the profession. All that part which relates to the general, descriptive, and pathological anatomy of the prostate has been much augmented; those portions devoted to the subject of treatment, in its various departments, have been increased, and sometimes altered; while much of the old matter has been rearranged, and some rewritten, so as to render the work more complete and more useful. A number of new plates, which are admirably executed, have also been added, for the purpose of illustrating important points in pathology.

The views of Mr. Thompson in regard to the anatomy, the physiology, and the pathology of the diseases of the prostate, although given more *in extenso* in the present publication, are the same with those set forth in the volume already noticed in this journal, and it will be unnecessary to remark upon them again. We may limit ourselves, on the present occasion, to noticing the changes made in the chapter on the treatment of enlarged prostate.

Anony of the muscular coat of the bladder is added to the list of evils described as consequent upon enlarged prostate, from the retention of urine and habitual distension of the bladder. To resuscitate the lost function Mr. Thompson recommends cold affusion suddenly made on the abdomen twice a day, cold injections into the bladder, and these failing the passing a current of electricity by applying one pole to the lumbar region of the spinal column, and the other to the perineum and hypogastric regions alternately. A very mild current, he adds, has been passed, it is said with advantage, after the failure of a less direct route, by applying the latter pole (the one on the perineum) to the neck of the bladder, through the urethra. We have seen ourselves, in one case, recovery of the power over the bladder to follow the application of electricity, which was passed through the bas-fond of the bladder and part of the prostate by means of a sound introduced beyond the prostate into the rectum and another through the urethra into the bladder.

In *chronic cystitis*, the consequence of prostatic obstruction, croton oil is no longer recommended as a counter-irritant; and the best method of making permanent counter-irritation is described as that of rubbing a moistened stick of nitrate of silver on the skin above the pubes, first removing a portion of the hair. To the list of medicines administered internally, as possessing most value in chronic cystitis, senega and couch-grass (*Triticum repens*) are added. The decoction of senega, Mr. Thompson declares, he has found to exercise a greater influence on the mucous secretion of the bladder than any other remedy. He was led to try it from its reputation for controlling the bronchial catarrh of elderly people. An infusion of the underground stem of the couch-grass,¹ in doses of from half a pint to a pint in the twenty-four hours, is an agent from which he has derived much advantage; he says that where the indications are to lessen the frequency and the pain of micturition, it is unquestionably useful, often affording relief when buchu, pareira, uva ursi, &c., have failed.

¹ For the method of preparing this infusion, see *Quarterly Summary*, p. 217.

When there is a phosphatic deposit in the urine, while this is loaded with mucus and is ammoniacal or fetid, Mr. Thompson says that he has often witnessed the good effect of injecting very dilute solutions of the acetate of lead, about one-fourth, or one-third of a grain to the ounce of water. A few ounces of plain warm water should first be injected, and after remaining about half a minute, permitted to run out. The solution of lead should only remain from thirty to fifty seconds.

The instrument of his own invention to be employed for effecting the reduction of enlarged prostate by compression, which was described in his former work, Mr. Thompson has evidently thrown aside after further experience. The risk encountered of irritating the parts by attempts of this kind, he now says, does not compensate for any little benefit attained, and which is mostly only temporary in its character. Hence, he adds, he does not advise adoption of any known method of compression, believing that in most cases the progress of the disease is more retarded by good general management of the case, and the avoidance of irritation in every form, than by any specific attempt of a mechanical nature to reduce the tumour or dilate the neck of the bladder. The other additions to this chapter, on the treatment of prostatic enlargement, are on the subject of the use of electricity for attempting the reduction of the tumour, and of this Mr. Thompson speaks unfavourably.

In its present state the work of Mr. Thompson is by far the best with which we are acquainted, in any language, on the important subjects of which it treats; and we take sincere pleasure in calling to it the attention of the profession.

W. F. A.

ART. XXVI.—*The Placenta, the Organic Nervous System, the Blood, the Oxygen, and the Animal Nervous System, Physiologically Examined.* By JOHN O'REILLY, M. D., etc. etc. 8vo. pp. 204. New York and London, 1861.

This is the second edition of a somewhat curious, but, at the same time, it must be confessed, an interesting treatise. Its author has made the attempt to penetrate the mystery by which, heretofore, the nature and the seat of animal life have been invested, and to trace not only its mode of action, but the very apparatus, in all its parts, through which it produces the various vital phenomena. Nerve-action and life-action are with him synonymous. In the organic nervous system he locates or centres that intangible principle by the presence of which living organized matter is distinguished from that which is dead and inorganic—which preserves the body from decomposition, and, when roused into activity through the agency of the blood and oxygen, brings into action the function of respiration, creates animal heat, effects digestion, haematosis, and nutrition, the growth of the body, and secretion, depuration, and excretion, all, in short, of the phenomena of life, from the evolution of the ovum—the development of the fetus, the several changes which occur in after-life—the production of disease and likewise its removal, whether by the exercise of an inherent recuperative power or under the modifying influence of foreign curative agents. Nay, even the operations of the animal nervous system, and of the intellect itself, are, according to Dr. O'Reilly, dependent upon and subordinate to the action of the organic nervous system.

We are well convinced that a full recognition of a vital principle or influence, as the sole cause and sustainer of the phenomena of the living organism, and of the nervous system as its motor, regulator, and distributor, is essential to a satisfactory solution of the physiology, pathology, and therapeutics of the human system, and we look with approval upon every attempt to bring us back to the doctrines of vitality and of nerve influence; to repudiate which such strenuous efforts have, of late years, been made in certain quarters. We would, therefore, ask for the work of Dr. O'Reilly a favourable reception; not because its author can be said to have been successful in the establishment of the doctrines advanced by him in relation to life and nerve action, but because of our belief